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MEMOIR

OF

LOENZA HOWARD:

OF NORTH BRIDGEWATER, MASS.

Written for the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, and approved by the Committee of Publication.

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MASSACHUSETTS SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETY,
Depository, No. 13 Cornhill.
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MEMOIR OF

LOENZA HOWARD.

In preserving some "pleasant memories" of this interesting young woman the writer is influenced, he trusts, not by the desire to soothe the grief of the bereaved parents and family, by exhibiting the worth of the treasure which they possessed. A poet has truly said:—

> "There is a tear,
> Which, streaming for an object loved and lost,
> *Relieves* us, while its *sweet oppression loads;*
> And, by *augmenting*, *blunts* the sting of woe."

But the "strong consolation" of God's children, when called to resign the objects of their fond affection, is found in

the contemplation of His immutable perfection, and of the relation which he sustains to them as a covenant-keeping God, who, though he cause grief, yet will have compassion, according to the multitude of his tender mercies; who takes but what he gave, and afflicts his people, not for his pleasure, but for their profit, and to make them partakers of his holiness. Yet sweet indeed to Christian parents, when called to lay the remains of a beloved child beneath the clods of the valley, is the thought that, while their natural affection is thwarted, their better desires are fulfilled; that their heart's treasure is "not lost, but laid up," to be received again at length as a part of that inheritance which is reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. It is to encourage those, to whom the nurture and admonition of young immortals is entrusted, to sow the

seed of divine truth early and constantly in their opening minds, waiting patiently and prayerfully for the effective blessing of the Holy Spirit on their labors; and to remind those who are favored with such early instruction, of their advantages and obligations, that this simple memoir is written. The subject of it was removed from this world, just as the distinguishing traits of her character had begun to develope themselves in a decisive manner, and to intimate what she would have been, had she been spared to act out her principles amid the scenes of maturer life. Her piety was the piety of childhood, or at most, of early youth. Yet, though her earthly life was short, and not distinguished by any of those remarkable incidents or vicissitudes, which afford opportunity for the most striking exhibition of character, and which give such peculiar interest to some biographies, she was enabled at least to illus-

trate the efficacy of Gospel truth, as God's appointed means for subduing and purifying our fallen nature, in a manner honorable to Him and encouraging to his people.

Loenza, daughter of Mr. Lewis and Mrs. Eliza Howard, was born at North Bridgewater, Plymouth County, Massachusetts, October 30th, 1831. From her earliest childhood she evinced an amiable and affectionate disposition, which strengthened as she grew older. Many hours, which she might have spent in play, had she been so inclined, were devoted by her to little acts of kindness to her parents. Self-denial, for the pleasure and benefit of those about her, seemed a *luxury*. When she was presented with confectionery, or any thing which would admit of division, her brothers and sisters were sure to share largely; a small portion only, if any, being reserved for herself. A little incident which occurred

when she was eight or ten years of age, may serve to illustrate this trait of her character. That season there was an unusual scarcity of apples; consequently they were not often given her, but occasionally she would be favored with one, which, as she was very fond of them, she considered a prize. There was one child to whom she almost invariably gave one half. One day, when that object of her generosity had an apple, and she had none, she solicited a small portion of it—a "taste," to use her own expression—and was refused. This, among children in general, would be nothing remarkable, but to Loenza it was a real affliction; not that she cared much for the trifle withheld from her; she could easily do without the apple, but the *love* which would have given it she could not resign without a pang. Her mother observed her sorrowful aspect, and inquired the cause. With her customary

frankness she related the circumstance, and acknowledged the pain it had given her; but disclaimed any feeling of resentment, and added, showing at once, the unselfish nature and salutary effect of her sorrow, "Mother, when I have another apple, I will give her half again."

When any little broils occurred among the younger children of the family, she was sure to act as peace-maker, gently soothing their ruffled feelings, and restoring them to quietness and good humor.

About this period of her life she became a member of the Sabbath school connected with the first Congregational church in North Bridgewater, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Mr. Couch, to which her parents belonged. She would probably have joined the school much earlier, but for the distance from the house of worship at which she resided, which rendered a regular attendance difficult. Prepared by early religious

instruction at home, she highly valued and diligently improved the privileges of the Sabbath school and the teachings of the pulpit. The good seed of the word, whether sown by the hand of a parent, a pastor, or a Sunday school teacher, "fell in a fruitful place." She made it a point of duty to be familiar with her lesson; and it was to her no irksome task. She loved to learn, and grudged not the labor which mental improvement required. Indeed, she manifested an ardent desire to learn, even before she could speak plainly. She knew the alphabet well before she had completed her second year; and that not in consequence of being urged or allured to the acquisition of it, but from her own spontaneous desire of knowledge. She would get a book, and ask the name of this and that letter, and not willingly rest until she had ascertained it. The fruit of these early efforts, however, she lost

at the age of two years, when she was dangerously sick.

On recovering from this distressing malady, after a confinement of twelve weeks to her bed, she had forgotten all she had previously learned. By renewed diligence, however, the loss was soon repaired, and her progress from that time was steady. She delighted in reading, preferring it to those amusements in which children of that age are generally most interested. The Bible especially engaged her attention; and from the period when she became capable of reading understandingly, to the close of her life, it was her daily companion. She greatly enjoyed preparation for the exercises of the Sabbath school, and it was a sore trial if any thing prevented her being constantly in her class. She felt a strong attachment to her teachers, and was grieved when any one of them was called to resign her charge,

as was the case in several instances, on account of a change of residence. She never lost her interest in them, but held them in affectionate remembrance while she lived. One of her last acts, before she was laid on a dying bed, was to fold and direct a paper, by way of remembrancer, to one who had for several years sustained that endearing relation to her. An endearing relation it is truly, when maintained in Christian fidelity; and sweet must be the recollections of those, who have thus coöperated with pious parents and faithful pastors, in feeding the lambs of the Redeemer's flock; or who have gathered those that were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd, and led them into the green pastures and by the still waters of peace and salvation. One of the teachers referred to above, being desired to give her testimony concerning this departed pupil, writes as follows: "She

was a member of my class, (if I mistake not,) from her first connection with the school, till I left it, which was about five years before her death. She was, from the first, attentive and serious; her lessons were thoroughly prepared; I recollect not an exception. I do not remember seeing her in her class, (as I have seen many much older than she was,) with open question-book and Bible, in order to search out references that it might be her lot to repeat. Her recitations evinced careful study, such as would do credit to those whose years trebled her's. Her mother said to me since her death, 'I never had to tell Loenza to get her Sabbath school lesson; she was ever ready to attend to it in season, and also to aid her brothers and sister in *their* preparation.' Being naturally of a reserved temperament, she was not easily drawn into very *familiar* conversation, relative to her religious

feelings. She seemed fearful lest she should express more than she really felt. But when I spoke of a Saviour's love in suffering for our sins, and our *ingratitude* and folly in refusing to accept of salvation purchased at so dear a rate, her moistened eye and quivering lip spoke with more convincing eloquence, than her tongue, (unaccompanied by such tokens of feeling,) could have done. When interrogated as to her feelings, she would acknowledge that she felt herself a sinner justly condemned, and exposed to the displeasure of God; seemed sensible of her need of just such a Saviour as had been graciously provided. She never intimated *to me*, however, that she had any reason to hope she was numbered among the lambs of his flock, but would express the wish that she might be. I think she gave Miss E. P. the impression that she indulged hope of herself as a Christian; but had she never

intimated to *any one* the hope that she had experienced the renewing and sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, *I* should believe that she gave evidence amply sufficient to justify the hope, yea, the *assurance*, that she endeavored to serve her Saviour here, the last years of her short life; and that she is now engaged in celebrating the praises of Him, who by his Spirit enabled her to resist the alluring vanities and temptations incident to childhood and youth, and to seek those more satisfying and enduring pleasures, of which even death had not power to rob her. What but the love of prayer, and the conviction of its efficacy, could have induced a child, ten or twelve years of age, (especially of her reserved turn of mind,) to retire with several brothers and sisters, for the purpose of imploring the blessing of her Heavenly Father upon them?

Perhaps it would not be amiss to

mention something in relation to her character as a week-day scholar, she having been eighteen weeks a member of my school. *Trifles* had not power to prevent her attendance. I have no recollection of one solitary misdemeanor, or imperfect recitation. She aimed at entire propriety of conduct, and her efforts were *remarkably* successful. Whatever the requisition, cheerfulness characterized her obedience. By her untiring diligence she left most of those of her own age far in the rear, and even surpassed many who had been in the field much longer than herself. But I saw nothing of the triumphant sneer cast back upon those left behind, but, on the contrary, the helping hand was with pleasure extended. She was far removed from the rudeness, and even hilarity, to which those of her age are often unduly addicted. I have even thought that a greater flow of mirthfulness would have given a

more healthy tone to mind and body. She was cheerful, but sedate beyond her years. Instead of seeking her pleasure in childish amusements, she sought it in the discharge of what she considered her duty to her teacher, her schoolmates, and herself. I love to review my intercourse with the dear departed child, and live over again, in imagination, those pleasant seasons, in which I was cheered and strengthened by her amiable and exemplary deportment. The teacher's employment would be rendered *doubly* delightful, were all pupils disposed to follow her bright example."

Another writes thus: "I had been the teacher of the class, of which (when at home) she was a member, about three years at the time of her death; and ever found her a constant attendant, when circumstances or health would permit, and one who gave her undivided attention to the subject of the recitation.

The subject of personal religion was often introduced, but being of retiring manners, she was not so accessible in conversation as many others; yet I was led to believe that she had sought and obtained an interest in the great salvation purchased for us by our dear Redeemer. In our weekly collections in the Sabbath school, she manifested a deep interest, and by her example seemed to say that she thought it 'more blessed to give than to receive.' I saw her during her sickness, but she was unable to converse at all; but I have ever felt that she was prepared for the change which awaited her. She was very amiable in her disposition, and I had become much attached to her; and was very happy to hear that you had undertaken to write a memoir of her life."

It was not until she had passed her eighth year, that her parents became convinced she was under the strivings

of the Spirit. It was a season of revival in the church and society. Many around her were brought to the knowledge of the truth. She became much interested. Her mind was deeply and painfully impressed with a sense of guilt and danger. Grief and anxiety "held her eyes waking," and at length overpowered her natural reserve. With a trembling voice she called her mother, *at midnight*, to her bedside. The summons was promptly obeyed, and, on being tenderly asked what was the cause of her disquietude, she answered, "Mother, I feel that I am so great a sinner that I cannot sleep; I wish you to pray for me." Such a request, addressed to one whose spirit was even then "travailing in birth again" for the salvation of her beloved child, met, without doubt, a ready and earnest compliance. The prayer thus offered seemed to prevail. Her mind appeared

more composed; and though no sudden and surprising revolution of feeling was manifested, it is hoped that, even at that midnight hour, "the day was dawning, and the day-star arising," in that youthful heart. The throne of grace, which she was then aided to approach, was ever after her constant refuge; and she was known to retire daily, at stated seasons, for secret communion with Him who had thus "enlarged her when she was in distress." From that period she became more deeply interested in every thing of a religious nature, and more decidedly averse to frivolous amusement and conversation. She manifested an increased attachment to her Bible, and preferred the society of Christians to that of her light-hearted and gay companions. She was particularly interested in reading memoirs of pious children; and especially one of a *little girl*, (the name

is not now remembered,) out of whose mouth the Lord had ordained praise, and whose favorite hymn Loenza often repeated as an expression of her own feelings. So frequently did she repeat it, that it became almost as familiar to her mother as to herself. The whole cannot now be recalled; but the two following verses were part of it, and from these my young readers, who are familiar with the Sabbath School Library, may recognize the book referred to:—

"Come, Holy Ghost, my soul inspire:
This one great gift impart,—
What most I need, what most desire,—
A humble, grateful heart.

"Grant that I more myself may know—
From sin's deceit be free;
In all the Christian graces grow,
And live alone to Thee."

Such, we believe, were truly her prevailing desires. Dear young reader, *are they yours?* Search and see; for the

day is coming when you will need the consolation and support of religion as much as she; and God's gracious promises are addressed only to those who *seek* him—especially to those who seek him *early*.

As she grew older, she was much interested in reading the lives of eminent Christians, such as Brainerd, Payson, James B. Taylor, and others which are found in the "Evangelical Family Library;" most of the volumes of which she read and re-read. She loved to peruse Pike's "Persuasives to Early Piety," and "Guide for Young Disciples." "Daily Food for Christians," which was presented to her, she valued very highly. It was her pocket companion at home and abroad. It was brought, by her request, to her bed of sickness, and when she found herself unable to read it, her Mother, at her desire, read it to her, until the

increasing power of her disease forbade further communications of this kind.

She was frequently solicited, while in health and attending school in her native town, to mingle in scenes of youthful gayety with her companions. Their "parties of pleasure" had little attraction for her. Yet, that she might not seem ungrateful for kindness intended, she accepted an invitation to one of them. On her return from it, being asked how she had enjoyed herself, she replied, "Not half so well as I should at home with my parents."—She was induced, however, to attend a second. When she left home, her mother requested her to return by a certain hour. The hour passed, but she did not return. Nearly an hour elapsed beyond the appointed time before she arrived. She stated the reason for her seeming disregard of her parent's request, which showed clearly that the

fault was not hers;—she intended and endeavored to be at home as directed. Her parents were satisfied, and freely acquitted her of willful disobedience.—They retired to rest; but the thought that, after all her apologies, she might *seem* undutiful, and thus grieve the hearts most dear to her, was like a thorn in Loenza's pillow. About eleven o'clock her parents were awakened by her at their bed-side, craving their forgiveness, saying, "I cannot sleep till you forgive me!"

Having obtained her object, she again sought her pillow; and it is probable that, in the darkness of night, upon her bed, or perhaps upon her knees before her Saviour, she resolved never again to seek pleasure where she knew it was not to be found. She ever after manifested a determination to seek her enjoyments in those pursuits which would ensure pleasures substantial and

enduring, and by which she would be made wiser and better. She often expressed the fervent desire that her young friends would seek for more ennobling gratifications. One of them called to see her a few days before her death, and, perhaps with a view to divert her, or for want of other topics, said she was engaged to a "party" that evening, and asked L. if she did not wish she was able to attend.—"No!" was her decisive reply; "and I wish *you* would not go." When her friend had retired, she was asked why she did not say more to her on the subject. She answered, "If I get well, I intend to." But alas! she was not to have another opportunity to call her young companion away from those broken cisterns which can hold no water, to that inexhaustible Fountain which alone can quench the thirst of an immortal mind. Should the eye of

that young friend chance to light on this page, may she yet derive permanent benefit from the remembrance of that brief but instructive interview;—and hear her departed associate addressing to her, from the grave, that affectionate counsel which she wanted strength to utter on her bed of sickness.

The testimony of her teachers in the Sabbath and District schools, to the character which she maintained in both, has been given. At a subsequent period she became a member of the "Adelphian Academy" in her native town, from which, in the Spring of 1846, she was transferred to the "Wheaton Female Seminary" in Norton. By the teachers and members of both these institutions she was highly esteemed, as appears from letters of condolence, addressed by them to her parents, after her decease.

She evidently carried to those higher schools the same principles of conduct, and the same habits of propriety and diligence, which had secured so much of the love and confidence of those about her in earlier life. The compositions which she wrote, and the notes which she took of public discourses heard, during her connection with the Wheaton Seminary, evince the constancy and success of her endeavors to cultivate at once her intellectual powers and her Christian graces. Had her life been prolonged, she might have completed the regular course of instruction given in that excellent institution, and left it, at length, for some elevated sphere of usefulness to the cause of her Redeemer. But He had other designs concerning her. Toward the middle of October she was attacked by a fever, which interrupted her studies, and soon assumed so threaten-

ing an appearance, that her parents were sent for, and it was deemed advisable that they should take her home. They did so; and all the efforts which parental love and solicitude could prompt, or professional skill direct, were made to resist the progress of the fatal malady. But all in vain. She reached her father's house on the 16th of October, and on the 28th of the same month her spirit returned to God, who gave it. Had she continued two days more in this world, she would have completed her fifteenth year. The day of her funeral was the anniversary of her birth. What a celebration of it!—What an instructive and affecting coincidence!—what an epoch in the history of the family has that day become!

The nature and violence of her disease allowed little opportunity for conversation concerning her preparation for her final change. She expressed, how-

ever, with characteristic humility and self-diffidence, her hope in her Heavenly Father's mercy, and her submission to his sovereign will. She was ever disposed to a low estimate of her own attainments. Sensible of her deficiencies, and adopting the high standard of Christian character established in the Bible, she dared not speak confidently of her own religious state; but while she appeared evidently to rejoice in the service of her Lord and Saviour, she "served him with fear, and rejoiced with trembling." Her fears and doubts, we trust, were soon banished forever; and He, whom having not seen, she loved, has cleansed her from all the moral defilement which she loathed, and presented her faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

The following beautiful tribute to her memory is from an address to her schoolmates in Norton, by a senior

member and assistant teacher of the Seminary:

"The sweetness of her disposition—the amiability of her temper, won the love and affection of all her companions. She ever yielded to the superior advice of those about her without hesitation or reluctance; and never did a mother's heart bleed because of the wounds that daughter's unkindness had made, or a tear flow because of a bitter word from her mouth. The path of wisdom was a 'path of pleasantness' to her. She gathered eagerly the fruits of knowledge that were spread out before her on every side, and treasured them carefully in the store-house of her memory. To her, study was no weary task, but a labor of delight. Each day bore a record of her faithfulness and diligence, and each recitation found her prepared. She suffered no slight cause to divert her mind, or

turn her steps; but each morning found her in her seat: and even when her head was throbbing with pain, and her cheek glowed with the hectic flush of that fatal disease, she was still there. Truly may we say,—

'A bright lamp hath gone out.'

But her life

'Hath left surviving love—
A wealth of records and sweet feelings given,'

to remove from sorrow's heart its faintness, and cheer the mourning ones.—We may not mourn for her; for they that have loved an exile, must not weep that he has gone to his native land. We may rejoice that she was so soon called home. She may now drink deep of the waters of life, and quench her thirst for wisdom in the streams that flow from the fountain in heaven. She is wearing the crown of glory, and singing the songs of angels. Is there a crown of glory laid up for

us ?—and are *our hearts and voices* tuned to join in such melodies? While we cherish her memory, and think of her as a dweller in a happier clime, *let us be ready*, if the destroying angel meet us in our youth, for

'All seasons are ours to die.'"

On the day of Loenza's interment, while the teachers and members of the "Adelphian Academy" were assembled at the house of mourning to unite with many others in the funeral solemnities, the Principal of the Wheaton Seminary wrote thus to her parents:—

'Dear Friends,—Though personally unacquainted with you, yet I cannot but yield to the promptings of my heart, and express to you, as parents of my deceased pupil, my heartfelt sympathy and sorrow in your sudden bereavement. In your affliction I do most painfully share. Your beloved

daughter was a lovely member of our school; and while with us, her gentle deportment, faithfulness in the discharge of duty, and apparent prevailing desire to please and gratify her teachers, won their affections and esteem. We feel ourselves deeply afflicted in her death, and our hearts are called to mourn.—We know, from our short but pleasant acquaintance with her, that a very tender tie has been sundered—that the light in your domestic circle is dimmed, and that your hearts are left bleeding and desolate. But there is light in this darkness—joy in your sorrow. As the Christian's hope was hers, your irreparable loss is her infinite gain. Let this cheer you in your darkness and desolation.

"The chastisement is grievous, and the providence inscrutable: but if your faith and hope rest upon a Heavenly Father's promises, you will feel that

'He doeth all things well,' and does not willingly afflict and grieve his children. Accept my deep sympathy in this dark hour. That God would bring consolation to your riven hearts, is the earnest prayer of

"Yours sincerely,
"M. C. S."

The following tribute to Loenza's memory was addressed to her mourning parents by a Christian friend, who well knew her. Though not intended for publication, its truth and appropriateness will, I trust, induce the much esteemed writer to pardon the liberty I have taken in placing it here without her permission :—

"TO THE PARENTS OF LOENZA HOWARD.

"Sweet peace have they whose trust is in the Lord;
Who leave themselves, their all, in his safe care—
With firm reliance on his plighted word,
That they who trust *Him* shall his kindness share.

"Think not, my friends, though gathering tempests lower—
Though clouds and darkness vail your noonday sky,
That you are not the subjects of his power,
Or that compassion beams not from his eye.

"'Tis true, your wound is deep; for she you mourn
Was lovely as a fair, a blooming rose:
The virtues which, *retiring*, most adorn,
Failed not their early promise to disclose.

"An elder sister—kindness was the rule
By which she sought to guide, or to restrain;
And love's deep promptings the entire control
Her unaspiring heart had wish to gain.

"A daughter dear—with what untiring care
She strove your every precept to obey;
Your griefs to solace, and your toils to share—
Your pleasures heighten, and your pains allay.

"Nor yet alone does the domestic hearth
Grieve for the loss of one in life so dear:
Her many friends lament her early death,
And drop with you the sympathetic tear.

"But though you mourn, yet you may still rejoice;
For many mercies mingle in that cup,
Since you may think the Saviour was her choice,
Her friend, her portion, and her only Hope;—

"That He, who early marked her for his own,
By his own Spirit moving on her heart,
Led her to seek the pearl of price unknown—
To choose, in life's gay morn, the better part.

"If so—transplanted to a brighter sphere—
Her voice all melody—her heart all praise—
Escaped all sin, all sorrow and all fear—
High sound her notes in more than angel's lays,—

"Let us not call her from her blest employ;
But, with more fervent zeal, ourselves prepare,
That we—our work well done—may hail with joy
The call to leave this earth, and join her there.

S****.

The closing lines of this consoling epistle might well serve as the conclusion of this brief memoir. I shall not detain the reader by any prolonged reflections of my own. The simple facts in Loenza's history are full of encouragement to parents, pastors, Sabbath school teachers, and all, in short, who labor for the spiritual benefit of the rising generation. Their language is, "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand." To the young they distinctly and emphatically say, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man: for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." These

texts are found, among others, in a little manuscript, in which Loenza recorded the "verses she learned at the school of Miss S. Field."

Between the leaves of that little book, she left also the following appropriate and beautiful lines, cut from some printed sheet, which may be regarded as her own dying testimony to the preciousness of Divine Truth. May it be verified in the experience of all my youthful readers.

"THE BIBLE.

"Thou truest friend man ever knew,
Thy constancy I've tried;
When all were false, I've found thee true—
My counselor and guide.

"The mines of earth no treasure give,
That could this volume buy;
In teaching me the way to live,
It taught me how to die."

THE END.

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